



Feeley Appointed to Senior VA Health Care Post

William F. Feeley, a native of Providence, R.I., was recently appointed Deputy Under Secretary of Health for Operations and Management for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).



"Mr. Feeley has a long and distinguished VA career of health care management," said Dr. Jonathan Perlin, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "We are fortunate to have him assume this leadership role."

In his new post, Feeley will manage the VA health care system's 21 regions and their 154 hospitals, 875 outpatient clinics, 136 nursing home care units and 207 Vet Centers. Feeley had been the director of VA's health care network in upstate New York since March 2003.

Feeley's VA career began in 1975. He was among a small group of senior federal executives in 2003 and 2005 who received the prestigious President's Rank Award for a long-term commitment to excellence. One of his major VA accomplishments was developing a customer service program that solicits feedback from veterans and their families about their perceptions of VA care.

A native of Providence, R.I., Feeley holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Providence College and a master's degree in social work from Boston University. He is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

VA 75th Anniversary Display Tours VISN Facilities

The VA 75th Anniversary Display has been rotating between the VISN 12 facilities. When it reaches your facility, please take a few moments out of your day to review the display.



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CARES Update

Hines Opens New SICU

Hines is wrapping up a number of construction projects around the facility this spring, giving many areas of the hospital a brand new look. In late February, construction was completed on a new Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU), which opened on the second floor of Building 200. The new unit, which features spacious patient rooms and state-of-the-art equipment, offers patients and staff a much more modern environment.



Hines Director Jack Hetrick and Ruth Jennetten, Clinical Nurse Manager of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU), cut the ribbon on the brand new state-of-the-art SICU, which opened at Hines in early March.

"This project is the result of a lot of hard work on the part of Hines staff," said Jack Hetrick, facility Director. "Everyone from our clinical staff to our administrative and engineering employees got involved and made the completion of the new SICU a reality."

The SICU project was funded through the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process that also brought Hines the new Spinal Cord Injury and Blind Rehabilitation Centers that opened last May. Patients were moved to the new unit on February 27th.

"Our staff is very excited about the new look and feel of the SICU," said Ruth Jennetten, SICU Clinical Nurse Manager. "We are thrilled to be able to offer our patients such a great environment in which to receive their care. So far, feedback about the new SICU from our staff and most importantly from our patients and their families, has been overwhelmingly positive."

In addition to the new SICU, a number of other construction projects are ongoing around the Hines campus. In April, outpatient clinics currently located on the first floor of Building One, will be relocated to the fourth floor of Building 200. Eventually, most patient care areas will be relocated to Building 200 in an attempt to make it easier for patients and staff to navigate the facility. A new coffee kiosk, called the Emerald Café, recently opened in the main lobby of the hospital. The new kiosk offers patients, visitors and staff excellent coffee and refreshments on weekends and after hours when the Canteen is not open. A number of other moves and construction projects, including the remodeling of the Emergency Department, patient restrooms and elevators are also ongoing at Hines.

Jesse Brown Bed Tower



With its elevator shafts and stairwells already in place, construction of the inpatient bed tower for the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center continues. The contractor is presently pouring concrete for the second and third floors of the seven-story addition, which is expected to be completed in late 2007.



New Cardiac Cath Lab at Jesse Brown

Jesse Brown VA Medical Center (JBVAMC) opened its new Cardiac Catheterization Unit on February 7. The state-of-the-art unit offers improved quality, with less radiation exposure and expanded capabilities to image the entire body.

"We can now perform procedures on patients with vascular problems, as well as cardiac," said Adhir Shroff, M.D. "Additionally, each individual scan will provide us with multiple views, which reduces the amount of time needed to complete a test."



Staff celebrating the opening of the new unit included (from left) Dr. Shroff; Stephanie Murray, RN; Adrienne Holley, RN; Jimmy Figgs, EMS; Bernadette Speiser, RN; Haridell Ford, Medical Service; and Lourdes Teruel, RN. The cardiac catheterization unit is under the direction of John Kao, M.D., Chief of Cardiology (not pictured).

The opening of the new unit ended a unique arrangement between JBVAMC and the neighboring University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center (UICMC). During the six months that JBVAMC's Cardiac Cath Lab was under renovation, veterans needing cardiac catheterization services received them at UICMC, although the services were provided by VA staff.

Network News

Hines

Mid-March marked the three-year anniversary of the beginning of the conflict in Iraq. A number of Chicago-area newspapers and television stations

featured stories about veterans as part of their anniversary coverage. Hines decided to take this opportunity to publicize some hospital programs and initiatives by contacting the local media to let them know about the special War Trauma Therapy Group that Hines has set up to treat Iraqi veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. As a result, the Coordinator of the Hines PTSD Program, Ed Klama, was prominently featured in a *Chicago Tribune* story in the Sunday "Perspectives Section." Klama, who has been a counselor at Hines since the 1970s, was also videotaped by the *Tribune*. You can see his story by going to the *Tribune* web site at www.chicagotribune.com/features/health/chi-0603190191mar19,1,2596040.story and look at the video by going to www.chicagotribune.com/veterans.

In addition, in early March Hines social workers involved in PTSD treatment were featured in the *Pioneer Press* Newspaper in Deerfield and were interviewed by the *Chicago Sun Times*. An extensive Associated Press story about the Hines PTSD program is still pending.

Jesse Brown



As part of its National Nutrition Month activities, JBVAMC held a food drive that collected over 600 pounds of dry and canned goods for donation to the Food Pantry at the Beverly Veterans Resource Center. Among the Nutrition & Food Service staff that helped to load up the van were (from left): Anne Myslinsky, RD; Doris Marshall; Jolie Lewis-Rubin, RD; Johnnie Minefee; Jennifer Burke, RD; Lori Stubbs, Office Manager, Vets Center; Annette Keys, RD; and Shari Pollack, RD

Dozens of JBVAMC employees attended a Pep Rally in January to kick off the medical center's new MOVEmployee weight management program sponsored by the Employer of Choice Committee.



Photo caption – JBVAMC staff members joining the MOVEmployee program wait for their initial weigh-in by Debbie Cuthbertson, Recreation Therapist (left).

To help participants chart their weight loss, weekly weigh-ins are held on Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons to make them accessible to employees from all shifts. During each weigh-in, staff members coordinating the MOVEmployee Program focus and provide handouts on a different aspect of effective weight management. The program encourages participants to develop a personal strategy that will enhance their efforts. Employees are also invited to join the MOVEmployee 30-minute walks that are held twice daily on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



Zakiyyah Barfield (left) and Patrice Williams, members of JBVAMC's Nursing Service, performed "Never Can Say Goodbye" during a Valentine's Day Jam Session on February 14.



In the spirit of unity so eloquently stated by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., members of JBVAMC's Special Emphasis Program Committees took turns reciting Dr. King's Six Principles of Nonviolence during the medical center's annual Martin Luther King Birthday Celebration Service on January 12. Participating staff included (from left): G-Kay Hail, Black Employment Program (BEP) Committee Member; Jerry Bolden, BEP Committee Member; Sandra Brown, People with Disabilities Program Manager; Janet Evans-Dale, BEP Manager; Floretta Strong, BEP Committee Member; Jose Granado, Hispanic Employment Program Manager; and Char Brar, Federal Women's Program Manager.



Marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first continuous, collegiate black Greek letter fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha, JBVAMC staff members Deborah Brown (from left), Barbara Haynes-Donati and Lynette Taylor were among the 15 employees that participated in the medical center's Black History Month program to speak on the 2006 theme "Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social and Civic Institutions." The three women are members of the Sigma Gamma Rho sorority.

Madison

Serving Veterans with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness

In the early 1970s in Madison, WI, an experiment began in the treatment of adults with severe and persistent mental illness. The assertive community treatment (ACT) model of integrated, intensive and comprehensive services provided by an interdisciplinary team of skilled clinical case managers working in community settings replaced an older model of case management where clinical services were provided, if at all, in a fragmented manner. The research proved that ACT programs reduced homelessness, reduced psychiatric severity, increased the number of mentally ill holding jobs, and significantly reduced the time spent in psychiatric hospital units. Recognizing a good thing, the VA began an initiative in 1987 with ten ACT style programs in northeastern VA medical centers. Called Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) by the VA, there are now ninety-two certified MHICM teams across the country and more are being formed each month. There are six teams in VISN 12.

Madison's MHICM team, called a community support program (CSP) locally, admitted its first veteran in August 1995. The Madison VA CSP celebrated 10 years of operation in 1995 and today has 48 vets enrolled. The clinical staff consists of two nurses and two social workers, a psychiatrist, plus an administrative assistant. The importance of the work of the CSP can be illustrated in the lives of two CSP veterans. Both were institutionalized for over 17 years, one at the Tomah VA and one in the county locked facility. Today both are living in the community, one in a group home and one in his own apartment. Without the CSP, neither would be able to live in the community. The CSP has shown a reduction of inpatient days of 78% (one year post-admission to CSP), a significant cost savings to the VA. More importantly, all the VISN 12 MHICMs raise the quality of life for those who are among the least well off, most vulnerable, often with co-morbid substance abuse, social isolation, vocational

dysfunction, and frequent homelessness. MHICM serves these vulnerable and very interesting veterans with pride.

For further information about the Madison CSP, contact the program director, Doug Kirk, at (608) 256-1901, ext. 17195.

Vet to Vet Peer Support Program

One of the unique programs of Mental Health Service at VA Madison is their Vet to Vet Peer Support. The philosophy of this program is veterans are here to teach, to learn, and to help themselves and others on the road to recovery. They reach out to help their fellow veterans whenever they can, never leaving a fellow veteran behind. Their overall goal is to remember those who came before them and to help those who will come after them. The specific program goals are: expand our social support network; increase our trust in others; decrease isolation and loneliness; participate in group problem solving; teach ourselves and others about recovery; increase our ability to cope, and learn to enjoy doing things with others.

The Vet to Vet variety of activities include: recovery education and support for a variety of problems, including mental illness and substance abuse; a strength based recovery and wellness program using a self-help Pathways to Recovery workbook; "Photo Shoot" community outings where veterans become familiar with their community, learn to use a digital camera, and then learn to use a computer by processing their photographs; the monthly Birds of a Feather Newsletter; volunteer work including involvement in two community kitchens that make meals to feed the hungry; semi-annual hospital-wide bratwurst sales; community activities to sporting events, plays and parks; weekly coffee club; and annual camping trips.

One of the veterans said it best, "The Occupational Therapy program helped me to get started on my path to recovery, but the Vet to Vet Program has really challenged me to follow my path. I am busy everyday with activities that are meaningful to me.

I've made good friends. I've been reconnected with my family."

For further information on the Vet to Vet Program, contact volunteer Mike Trawitzki at (608) 256-1901, ext. 11338.

For more information on the Occupational Therapy Wellness Programs, contact Kristi Rietz or Jane Williams at (608) 256-1901, ext. 11339 or 11393.

Performance Improvement Fair Held at Madison VA

Over 500 Madison employees participated in a Performance Improvement Fair on January 26, 2006, according to Nathan Geraths, Director. The theme of the Fair was "Cruise on to Excellence" with the conference room decorated in a tropical motif. The Fair focused on increasing awareness of Patient Safety, Infection Control, Medication Management and department/unit Performance Improvement activities in preparation for the unannounced Joint Commission survey. Participants were issued "passports" that were stamped at various "ports" or stops in their journey through the Fair which made them eligible for education credit and prize drawings. A team chaired by Tom Miller, Manager, Organizational Improvement, planned and staffed the event.



L to R: Performance Improvement Fair participant Cleofelisa Lagman, Nutrition & Food Service, learns about equipment safety from Esther Moore, Medical Equipment Repairer.

North Chicago

Pediatric Life Support

In June the North Chicago VA Medical Center (NCVAMC) will open its doors to Department of Defense families. NCVAMC expects to see about 4,000 children in the emergency department annually.

In preparation for receiving this special population, NCVAMC staff started extensive advanced training. In fact, North Chicago emergency medical staff was the first to conduct and complete a pediatric advanced life support (PALS) course within the VA system. This past summer, the emergency department chief and five nurses traveled to Resurrection Hospital to obtain their PALS instructor credentials. For the course they were joined by Navy pediatricians and nurses who helped facilitate the curriculum. The joint teaching was in the best spirit of VA/DoD cooperation.

The pediatric advanced life support course highlights the critical information needed to recognize infants and children at risk for cardiopulmonary arrest, the strategies needed to prevent cardiopulmonary arrest in infants and children, and the psychomotor skills needed to resuscitate and stabilize infants and children in respiratory failure, shock or cardiopulmonary arrest.

Although there was a lot to learn, everyone gained vital hands on experience and had the opportunity to demonstrate key pediatric life saving maneuvers.

"My staff and I are excited to receive children as our patients and we look forward to June when they will begin to arrive. We are dedicated to each child's best medical outcome and we have targeted our staff for quality training to ensure each parent understands our commitment," said Dr. Mark Olszyk, Chief of the Emergency Department at NCVAMC.

"The PALS training is just one of several initiatives that are taking place at North Chicago as we prepare for Naval Hospital Great Lakes (NHGL) shifting their inpatient which includes pediatrics, surgery and emergency services to us in June," says Patrick

Sullivan, Medical Center Director. Currently, renovations are underway to expand the NCVAMC's Surgery and Emergency Departments. This is Phase II of the partnership with NHGL.



Naval Hospital Great Lakes and North Chicago VAMC staff demonstrate advanced pediatric life saving strategies during a recent training session.

Phase I was the shifting of NHGL's inpatient mental health services to North Chicago in October 2003.

Phase III of the partnership is the total integration of services between NCVAMC & NHGL. This will include the Department of Defense (DoD) constructing a new ambulatory care center to be located on the NCVAMC campus. First a parking garage is scheduled to be built beginning in 2007, followed by the construction of the ambulatory care center. The entire project is scheduled to be completed in late 2009 or early 2010.

To accomplish this joint venture ongoing planning with six national VA/DoD joint work groups have been active creating a new federal health care system that will be a model for future VA/DoD joint ventures. The groups will develop vital contingencies within the unfolding federal health care facility. Their efforts are focusing on Human Resources, Information Management and Technology, Leadership, Clinical, Finance and Budget, and Administration functions. Governance will include an interagency Board of Directors, Advisory Board, a VA Medical Center Director and Navy Deputy Director.

The primary goals of this collaboration are to improve access, patient satisfaction, and timely delivery of services for VA and DoD beneficiaries while improving efficiencies and reducing costs.

Clothing Room Provides Needed Service to Veterans

In 1990, the State Commander of The American Legion made the clothing room at the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center his project and collected enough money to remodel the room. Formerly it was used by the laundry. Unmarked clothes were sent there and volunteers would size and sort them. Then volunteers and nursing staff were allowed to come in and get clothing needed for their ward. The new clothing room was opened in January 1991 with volunteers from the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, who still help staff it today.

Many veterans come in with only the clothes on their back, so it is very rewarding for the volunteers to see patients eyes light up as they enter what looks like a retail store with clothes either on shelves or hanging on racks. The difference from a real store is that everything is free. Veterans must be inpatients and have a form signed by a staff member stating their clothing needs.



Everything in the clothing room is donated. Donations come from both individuals and organizations. These are carefully examined and then are sized and sorted, folded and put on the shelves or hung on the racks. There are also two dressing rooms.

Victor Thomas, VA employee, who supervises the clothing room says, "The neat thing is that it looks just like a clothing store in the community and that it would not be possible without the volunteers who operate it. We thank the volunteers for helping provide this service to our veterans."

Tomah

Hall of Heroes Expands at Tomah VA

The Tomah VA's Hall of Heroes has two new inductees.

The induction ceremony was held on February 15. Col. Wilbert W. (Bill) Sorenson and Capt. Robert W. Teeples were the third and fourth veterans to be inducted into the facility's Hall of Heroes.



Sorenson, pictured to the right, is a Vietnam veteran from La Crosse who was awarded the following: Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross (2), the Soldier's Medal, The Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and The Air Medal. He served as Installation Commander at Fort McCoy from May 1984 to November 1988. Pictured, left to right: Stan Johnson, Medical Center Director; Col. Derek Sentinella, Commander at Fort McCoy, who presented the citations; Col. Sorenson; Sandy Gregar, Administrative Assistant to the Director and Acting Performance Improvement Director; and Jerry Molnar, Associate Director.

Teeples is a World War II veteran who received the Silver Star for gallantry while serving in New Guinea in 1944. He received a Direct Battle Field Commission from the rank of 1st Sergeant to 2nd Lieutenant while fighting with the Red Arrow Division in the Philippines. He also received the Bronze Star, Army Good Conduct Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Teeples is the father of Tom Teeples, who works in the Tomah VA mailroom.

Two local musicians provided songs at the beginning of the program. Later, the Tomah High School's Sophomore Choir sang, "A Song for the Unsung Hero." A representative of the Marshfield Elks #665, sponsor of the Hall of Heroes, also addressed the audience. Veterans who were nominated for the Hall of Heroes but not selected were introduced and presented a lapel pin by Stan Johnson.



Sorenson and Teeples joined the first two inductees in the Hall of Heroes: Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Einar Ingman, a Korean War veteran, and Vietnam veteran Kenneth Murphy, who received the Distinguished Service Cross. The next induction ceremony will be held on November 11, 2006, Veterans Day. Nomination packets are available by contacting Voluntary Service at the Tomah VA.

VA Awards \$442,000 Grant to Wisconsin Veterans Home

To make sure the Wisconsin State Veterans Home in King remains a comfortable residence for veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is targeting \$442,141 in grant money for improvements to the State home.

"This grant honors our commitment to care for the men and women of Wisconsin who have served in uniform," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Our federal-state partnership helps to provide comfortable housing for Wisconsin veterans in a caring community."

Nicholson was represented by William Kloiber, a VA special assistant, in a check presentation ceremony on

March 3 at the King State Veterans Home. Kloiber presented a check for \$442,141 to J.W. "Bill" Crowley, Commandant of the King Veterans Home, and John Scocos, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. U.S. Rep. Mark Green (R-Green Bay), was credited by the King officials for being instrumental in obtaining the grant.



Pictured, left to right: Jean Hundertmark, Wisconsin State Representative, District 40; J.W. "Bill" Crowley, Commandant of King Veterans Home; John Scocos, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs; Rep. Mark Green, and Bill Kloiber, representing VA.

The grant will pay up to 65 percent of the cost of replacing the steam and condensate lines at the King facility. Overall cost of the project is estimated at \$680,000.

Wisconsin also operates a veteran's home in Union Grove. The homes are available to veterans who served on active duty for two or more years or the full period of their initial service obligation, whichever is less. Veterans must have lived in Wisconsin for 12 consecutive months and have honorable discharges, or they must have been a Wisconsin resident at the time of entry into military service.

In fiscal year 2005, VA spent nearly \$1.2 billion in Wisconsin to serve more than 466,000 veterans who live in the State. VA operates major medical centers in Madison, Milwaukee and Tomah with outpatient clinics and Vet Centers across the state. VA health care was provided to about 100,000 people in Wisconsin during 2005.

Further information about Wisconsin's veteran's homes is available on the Web at <http://dva.state.wi.us/Homes.asp>.

Support Received for Tomah VA's Golf Course



The Tomah VA has a beautiful nine-hole golf course that has been open to the public for the last six or seven years. The golf course is operated with funds brought in by the paying public and with the added assistance of donations. In February, the Marshfield Elks Lodge #665 donated \$2500 to the golf course fund. Members of the Elks Lodge are pictured with Stan Johnson, Tomah VA Director, in the dark suit.

A golf tournament will be held at the Tomah VA Golf Course on May 20. The tournament is in memory of Jim Thielen, Roads and Grounds Foreman at the Tomah VA who retired on April 1, 2005. Thielen was instrumental in the conversion of the golf course from a "private" course for use by VA patients and Employees Association members only to the public course it is today. Thielen died suddenly in June 2005, and the golf tournament is to remember his dedication to the golf course and the veterans he served.

Network Awards and Recognition

Engineering Employees Honored for Service in Iraq

Anthony Travia and **Blair Smolar**, Chief and Assistant Chief of Hines Engineering Service, were honored at a Federal Executive Board Meeting in February for their service in Iraq. Both employees

volunteered to serve in Iraq as civilians for the Army Corps of Engineers early on in the conflict. They received the Operation Iraqi Freedom Civilian Service Pin for "volunteering to put their lives in harm's way to serve the needs of our country and the people of Iraq." Hines Director Jack Hetrick, who is Director of the Chicago Federal Executive Board, presented them with their awards.

Recipient of Two Prestigious National Awards



Jack Hetrick, Hines Director, was honored with two prestigious national awards at last month's annual American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) VA session. He was awarded the prestigious ACHE Senior Level Healthcare Executive Award as well as the VA Preceptor of the Year Award. He was honored for demonstrating visionary leadership skills that elevated the performance at Hines Hospital to bring the facility to the forefront as a leader in Veterans Health Administration. In addition, he has ensured Hines' prominent role within VHA for many years to come. His numerous accomplishments evidence the strong commitment and leadership that he regularly exhibits throughout all levels of the organization. In daily actions, Mr. Hetrick clearly personifies his pledge towards excellence in healthcare, education, and research, combined with an extraordinary dedication to serving veterans.

Mr. Hetrick attained Fellowship status within ACHE, is an avid promoter of ACHE and is forever advising others to become active members and supporters of this organization. Mr. Hetrick's many students over the past several years have been active participants at the VHA portion of the yearly Congress as they provide overviews of the projects they have developed during their residency period.

Hands and Heart Award



Dr. Toby Gendron, a staff physician at the VA medical center in Iron Mountain, received the Hands and Heart Award from Janice M. Boss, Medical Center Director.

Toby Gendron, M.D., a staff physician at the VA medical center in Iron Mountain received the prestigious award for patient care when the Hands and Heart Award was presented to him. "This award recognizes Dr. Gendron as a compassionate person whose dedication to veterans is marked with the highest standards in patient care," noted Janice Boss.

When presented the award, it was noted that Dr. Gendron is highly respected by his patients and by all who know and work with him. His devotion to his patients and the medical center is evident. As a respected clinician, he is often sought out by others for his guidance.

Dr. Gendron joined the VA staff in 1993 upon his discharge from the U.S. Army. He joined the Air Force reserves in 1994, being called to active duty in 2003, before his retirement from the Reserves in 2004. He lives in Iron Mountain with his wife, Karen. They have four sons: Jeremy, Jesse, Joe and Adam; and a daughter, Kristin.

Honored by Chaplains

In his opening remarks, Chaplain Norman Oswald referred to **Joanne M. Krumberger**, "as a woman of faith." Ms. Krumberger, former manager of performance improvement at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, recently received the Chaplain Service Eagle Award.

The honor was presented before she left for the VA Northern California Health Care System at Martinez where she is the new associate director. She had been at the Milwaukee VA for 29 years beginning her VA career as a student nurse.

Chaplain Oswald noted, "Joanne has exemplified the virtues of integrity, commitment, honesty, and compassion, always holding herself to the highest of standards and the honor is in recognition of the qualities of her life and service to veterans, their families and the VA staff." The award has been given only three times.



Joanne M. Krumberger receives the Chaplain Service Eagle Award from Chaplain Norman Oswald, program manager of pastoral care at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. Father Tim Kitzke, her pastor, looks on. Ms. Krumberger accepted the associate director position at Martinez, California.

"The eagle, in Scripture, is used to image God," explained Chaplain Oswald. "The mother eagle will lift up her young and take it on her wings to set it free and fly. The eagle will keep an eye on the young one and should it falter, will swoop down to catch it lest it meet harm. The Eagle Award symbolizes one who brings others to that point in their lives where they are able to take wing – to believe in themselves and to know their strengths."

"Joanne Krumberger in her life of service at this VA has done this for so many," continued Chaplain Oswald. "She wants others to succeed and be their best – and she has set the example by her life."

Following her farewell reception, the award was presented in the Medical Center chapel at a Mass celebrated by Chaplains Oswald, Lisowski and Father Kitzke. She began in her new position on April 4.

Dr. Sobczak Honored

Ken Sobczak, DDS, was surprised at the recognition. Quietly last fall, he interrupted a western hunting trip, boarded a plane to California and graciously accepted the President's Award of the American College of Prosthodontists.

The award is acknowledgment by his peers of outstanding vision and leadership to the welfare, education and advancement of the College and to the specialty of prosthodontics.



Dr. Sobczak is a VA dentist and more importantly; a good one. He has been at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center going on some 30 years which does not include his general practice residency training in 1973 – the year he graduated from the dental school at Marquette University. He then completed prosthodontic training at the VA Medical Center in Wilmington, Delaware and a Master of Science degree program in oral biology at Temple University.

The American Dental Association defines prosthodontics as a dental specialty in the restoration and replacement of teeth and oral structures. Extensive training and experience provide prosthodontists with a special understanding of the dynamics of a smile and the creation of tooth replacements.

The honor is important to Dr. Sobczak. However, he would rather talk of those who made it happen – his residents – when he was the program director of prosthodontics at the medical center. That is where the pride shows. The love of teaching and his former residents are paramount in his career.

Patrick Lloyd, DDS, former coordinator of the VA national geriatric dental program then based at the medical center and now Dean of the School of Dentistry at the University of Minnesota, nominated him for the prestigious award.



Dr. Sobczak directed the prosthodontic residency at the Milwaukee Medical Center for 22 years and has been on the faculty of the Marquette University School of Dentistry for 29 years. Many of his past residents were in the audience and joined in giving him a standing ovation after his acceptance remarks. In those remarks, Dr. Sobczak contended he was "...part of a process: the process of transferring knowledge and experience from one generation to the next. I am not unique. I represent a group of men and women who direct prosthodontic training programs. Being a prosthodontic program director can be difficult and frustrating, and it can be exhilarating and incredibly rewarding."

That evening, hundreds of miles from Milwaukee, he was "officially" rewarded. But actually, he said his biggest reward was the privilege of treating "...deserving patients. Veterans who paid for their treatment with an arm or a leg, with months and even years in internment camps or with neurohormonal or limbic system changes caused by the sheer terror and unspeakable horrors of wars fought in service to this country."

You see the good dentist is rewarded every day by his patients. It may be subtle and without applause, but it makes his day. He freely admits, "If I had a chance to do it over again, I wouldn't change a thing."

Kenneth P. Sobczak, DDS, received the President's Award in Los Angeles in October of last year. The award recognized his "...significant contributions and devotion to the American College of Prosthodontists and the specialty of Prosthodontics."

North Chicago Staff Receive Recognition

Two of North Chicago VAMC staff received recognition from the community.

Katherine Dong, Leader of Ancillary Services and Chief of Audiology/Speech Pathology Services was awarded the YWCA Women of Achievement Award for Advocacy/Public Service. This award recognizes women who are successfully involved in government or other public service areas who demonstrated leadership skills and also women who advocate for women's rights, racial equality and diversity and justice.

Katherine has also served as the Women Veterans Program Manager since 1995. She was instrumental in developing two VA/DoD Joint Incentive Funds (JIF) that included a joint comprehensive woman's health center and mammography unit with Naval Hospital Great Lakes (NHGL). Both of these proposals were approved and funded for \$1.9 million in start up funds. Katherine also authored a JIF proposal for a joint VA & NHGL purchase of an MRI which was selected for funding at \$3.4 million. She serves as the consumer affairs representative for Women's Wellness.

Katherine's leadership skills include being elected President of the Association of VA Speech-Language Pathologist, including representation of VA at meetings with American Speech-Language Hearing Association and Academy of Federal Audiologist and Speech-Language Pathologists. This is a 3 year term; she previously completed a term as secretary/treasurer of this group. Katherine also serves as a Field Advisory Council Member for VA

Central Office Audiology/Speech Pathology Office and is responsible for task forces involving Enhanced Scope of Practice, Development of a Clinical Doctorate and Tele-Therapy. Katherine is an active volunteer at her children's school and has made presentations for Women's History Month and Veterans Day to the students.

Katherine has a Bachelor of Science Degree from Bradley University and a Masters of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology from Northwestern University.

There was a tea on March 23 for all the Lake County YWCA recipient winners and then on May 5 there was an awards dinner at the Marriott Lincolnshire.

Sarah Fouse is the Clinical Coordinator/Nurse Manager at North Chicago VAMC. Sarah received the 2006 Most Influential African American Eagle Award. Candidates for this award are nominated by someone from the community and the selections are made by the Most Influential African American Advisory Board. The awards are given to role models in the community who are making outstanding contributions in the community, church, work and other areas.

Sarah has worked at North Chicago for 37 years. During this time she has held various positions from psychiatric nurse to her current position as clinical coordinator/nurse manager. Sarah has received her MS in Nursing and presently is enrolled at the University of Wisconsin working on her Doctorate.

Sarah is part of an interdisciplinary team giving nursing care to psychiatric patients. Sarah works closely to ensure the interdisciplinary team provides the highest quality of care possible.

Sarah is very active with the community and in particular with her church and her faith. She is also chairperson for the EEO Committee at the medical center.

VA Madison Employee a Hero

While recently driving to work shortly after 11 p.m., **Joanne Malisch**, Urgent Care Registered Nurse, VA Madison, noticed an unfamiliar glow on the upper story of a rural farmhouse. She turned around for a better look and saw that a small porch at the top of a stairway

leading to an upper apartment was on fire. She drove in the driveway and honked her horn until a resident of the downstairs came out and she told him that his house was on fire. While he rescued his wife and two small children, Malisch called for help, then returned to her car and again laid on the horn to help rouse the family upstairs. Now the entire porch and stairway exit was engulfed in flames. A lady with a baby emerged onto the upstairs deck, on the opposite side for the house that was now rapidly being consumed by the fire. While Malisch and others searched unsuccessfully for a ladder, the lady gathered up her husband and two additional children. With the wind blowing smoke in their faces and fanning the flames, the family feared they would have to jump. A deputy sheriff arrived, pulled his squad car up to the deck and stood on the roof. The father lowered his two older children to the deputy and then had to drop the baby to him. Malisch placed the children in the squad car and got all three of them covered with a blanket while the parents were lowering themselves to the deputy. The father, one child, and the deputy were taken to a local hospital where they were treated for smoke inhalation. Malisch arrived for her tour of duty at VA Madison only 20 minutes late with quite a story to tell.

Unique Grant Received

Dr. Dean Krahn, Chief, Mental Health Service Line at VA Madison and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin Medical School, is part of a team that has received a research grant to help address the obvious and urgent problems of Hmong elders who bear the psychological and physical scars of war and loss.

Joe Bazil Named as Illinois "Veteran of the Month"

When the State of Illinois announced last year it was initiating a "Veteran of the Month" award, Roy L. Dolgos, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, said one name immediately came to mind. "The first person I thought of was **Joe Bazil**," he said.

Bazil, Assistant Chief of Environmental Management Service and Outreach Coordinator for the Jesse Brown VAMC, was named as the Illinois Veteran of the Month for February. He accepted the award – only the second presented by the State – in front of a packed auditorium of cheering co-workers during the medical center's town hall meeting on February 23.

Prior to joining VA 30 years ago, Joe served with the US Army 101st Airborne Division. He is presently a member of Mayor Daley's Commission on Human Relations, the Chicago Police Department's Homeless Task Force, Advisory Boards for Vet Net and Veterans Strike Force – 1, AMVETS, the American Legion and the Veterans Resource Committee.



Joe Bazil (center), Assistant EMS Chief and Outreach Coordinator for the Jesse Brown VAMC, was named Illinois "Veteran of the Month" for the month of February. He accepted the award from Roy L. Dolgos, Director, and Rochelle Crump, Assistant Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Joe also received accolades for his work in helping the Veterans Benefits Administration with assistance efforts for veterans displaced by Hurricane Katrina, linking them to various resources, including medical care, housing and clothing.

"It was heartbreaking seeing these families come in here with absolutely nothing," Joe said, "but the way everyone pitched in to help them was wonderful."

Among the Katrina evacuees was a blind veteran and his wife. Joe made arrangements to replace the vet's cane and other medical devices from JBVAMC and then, after learning the veteran was unable to cash his VA disability check without having a local bank

account, called several financial institutions to find one that would accept the check. When another displaced veteran, accompanied by his three young children, asked if he could possibly get a television for his children to watch, Joe found himself working the telephones again. He called a series of appliance stores before a local Best Buy agreed to donate a TV to the veteran.

"The TV was presented to the veteran at the store," Joe recalled. "It was so heartwarming that people in the store were in tears watching."

Valor Awards

The Secretary's Valor Award recognizes employees and citizens for heroic efforts displayed during a major catastrophe. The Valor Award is the highest level of recognition and is given to VA employees who exhibit courage and who put their lives in jeopardy to save others.

Several of our Network employees were nominated because they exhibited great courage by voluntarily risking their personal safety to prevent the loss of human life or government property. As a result of their efforts, VA maintained continuity of care for several hundred acutely ill veterans under difficult conditions.

The following Police Officers were recognized by VA Secretary R. James Nicholson with the Valor Award at a ceremony in Washington for their dedication, selflessness and heroism for their participation in relief efforts for hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Grover Anderson, Eddie Borja, Michael Unthank and Jackie Wilds from Hines VAH; William Adkins from Jesse Brown VAMC; Lonnie Jeffrey, William Poirier, and Roger Vines from North Chicago VAMC.

In addition to 73 Valor Awards given nationally, 3,000 other VA employees were recognized with official commendations and more than 6,800 were awarded certificates of appreciation for showing great initiative and ingenuity by addressing and solving all manner of problems arising from flooding, wind damage, lack of power, water, medical supplies and transport during hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Someone You Should Know

Craig Holmes, M.D. Appointed as Chief of Staff, Iron Mountain VAMC

Craig Holmes, M.D. has been appointed Chief of Staff at the VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain, Michigan. His appointment was effective April 2, 2006.

Dr. Holmes was in private practice in Muskegon, Michigan before joining the VA staff in February, 1999 as a staff physician in Primary Care Service. In February 2002, he was promoted to the position of Chief, Primary Care Service and remained in that position until his selection as Chief of Staff.



A Wisconsin native, Dr. Holmes graduated from St. John's Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin and did his undergraduate studies at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin and the University of Oregon in Eugene. He received his Doctor of Medicine degree in 1975 from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. His internship and residency was completed at the Mayo Clinic, Mayo Affiliated Hospitals, in Rochester, Minnesota.

Dr. Holmes is a member of the American Society of Internal Medicine and the Michigan State Medical Society. He and his wife, Beth, reside in Iron Mountain.

National Salute to Hospitalized Vets

Illinois State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, who is also a candidate for governor, visited Hines last month in honor of the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. Topinka, who has had family members treated at Hines in years past, visits the Extended Care Center at Hines every February. Patients and staff response to her visit was very positive, as she stopped by patients room to distribute Valentines, give veterans a smile and a hug.



State Treasurer Topinka wrote an excellent opinion article about her Valentines visit to Hines. In the article, which appeared in the Riverside/Brookfield Landmark Newspaper, Ms. Topinka talks about the dedication of the Hines staff. To see the article go to: <http://www.rblandmark.com/main.asp?SectionID=3&SubSectionID=46&ArticleID=1148&TM=34313.74>.



At Iron Mountain, as part of National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week, veterans at the VA medical center in Iron Mountain received Valentine greetings, along with other special gifts, from Janice M. Boss, medical center Director. She is shown visiting with nursing home care unit resident, John Farrell, and

presenting Valentine gifts to him. The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans programs offers an opportunity to share time with veterans as a tribute to the sacrifices they made for our country.

The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans is observed for an entire week at the Tomah VA.



One of the biggest parts of the celebration is the arrival of Valentine greetings for veterans from literally all over the country! Volunteer Mary Callaway sorted and counted valentines for two full days – the Tomah VA received over 5,000 valentines from all over the United States!



Salute Week kicked off with Sauk County Day on Sunday. Volunteers from American Legion posts and auxiliaries in Sauk County visited the medical center, providing a large bingo game and cheese and sausage treats for the wards as well as the bingo. Singer Dick Scully entertained the veterans before the bingo started.



Members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars visited all of the wards on Tuesday, delivering Canteen Books for all the patients.



The Tomah Senior High School has two show choirs, "Renegades of Rhythm" (pictured above) and "The Limited Edition" (below).



Both choirs performed their competition shows during the noon meal on Tuesday.

The annual Valentine's Dance was held on Wednesday evening. Recreation Therapy Assistant Helene Stein (left) enjoyed help from Junior Little Miss Tomah Olivia Luebke and Little Miss Tomah Samantha Olson when snack-time arrived.

The music for the dance was provided by "The Country Revival Band," a group that performs each month for the veterans.



The veterans enjoyed something new this year: five couples who have taken ballroom dance lessons came to the Valentine's Dance. They enjoyed dancing to the live music and with the veterans. Some dancers indicated an interest in volunteering at the monthly dances in the Midway.

One of the annual events of the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week at the Tomah VA is the bowling tournament that is sponsored by the Disabled American Veterans. There are two divisions, one for veterans who are ambulatory and the other for veterans who use wheelchairs (and subsequently, the wheelchair ramp).



Veteran Merlin Tweed takes aim before going after that game-winning strike!

Madison's observance of the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans included the distribution of monetary gifts to all inpatients, an abundance of valentines, bedside visitations from a variety of visitors, an ice cream social, and a guessing contest with monetary prizes. Outstanding support was received from the University of Wisconsin Athletic Department with Coach Bo Ryan from Men's Basketball, along with the Spirit Squad including the cheerleaders, dancers, and Bucky Badger. Strong support was also received from service organization officials, the Marines, and the volunteers. Four Madison nationally affiliated television stations provided coverage including interviews at the event as did one of Wisconsin's largest daily newspapers. Over 7,500 valentines were received and distributed to the veterans at their bedsides as well as with their prescriptions and their meal trays, thanks to the support of Pharmacy and Nutrition & Food Services.



A Happy Winner!!! Patient Thomas Thomae of Wausau, WI, was obviously a delighted winner in Madison's National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Patient Guessing Contest. A total of \$100 in cash prizes were provided by the VAVS Committee for this well received contest where patients guess the number of pieces of candy in a jar. Two volunteers conducted the contest at the patient bedsides. L to R: Volunteer Ellen Blissenbach, Mr. Thomae, and volunteer Eileen Hardy.

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week was celebrated at the North Chicago VA Medical Center during the week of February 12-18 with the help of staff, volunteers and visitors. Perfectly timed to coincide with Valentine's Day, the same sentiments of caring and sharing match the salute's purpose of expressing honor and appreciation to this nation's veterans. Throughout the week, over 2,500 valentines, cards and letters poured in from area schools that students sent. Local schools and scout groups visited patient wards to personally hand out valentines and treats. Mayor Ken Kessler of Mundelein, Great Lakes Naval Station Commanding Officer Captain R. J. Postera, and Navy Chief of Staff Captain Mary Kolar visited various wards to personally thank each veteran for the service they gave to this country. Pizza parties were sponsored on all of the wards by Community Affairs and by the VA Voluntary Service volunteers. Several Navy Corpsmen volunteered their time to help escort veterans to these activities. Also, the 'The Test of Time' and singer Hank Bogdala entertained veterans with songs from the past.



Jesse Brown VAMC receives hundreds of valentines for veterans each year, many from Chicago-area students. Helping to distribute them to patients were volunteer Sandra Miller, volunteer Johnny White, AMVETS Service Representative Jesse Jumper, volunteer Duke Ellington, Voluntary Service staff Carol O'Brien and Voluntary Service Chief Marie James.

Rewarding Experience

As we are all aware, the funeral for Mrs. Coretta Scott King was held on February 7, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. Employees of the North Chicago VA Medical Center, Ms. Barbara Thomas and Ms. Sarah Fouse had the distinct pleasure of attending the funeral for Mrs. Coretta Scott King. They were able to have seats inside the church directly behind the family. Some people may ask the question, "How was this possible?"

Well, a journey begins with one step. Ms. Barbara Thomas and Ms. Sarah Fouse were the Chair and the Co-chair of the Martin Luther King Jr. program at the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Leadership at North Chicago VAMC has always been a big supporter of this yearly observance by supporting different speakers. The first step of the journey began with Al Pate, former Medical Center Director. He shared his personal story with Ms. Thomas and Ms. Fouse about his personal experience in relation to Martin Luther King Jr. But, of course, no one ever dreamed that the first step would lead to this great experience.

Because of the contact that was kept with the King family, Ms. Thomas and Ms. Fouse were able to attend the funeral as "friends" of the family knowing that they had a reserved seat. A seat that if they stood up, they would have been able to shake hands with Bishop Long, the four Presidents and all the others that were on the rostrum.

The atmosphere of the entire event will never be able to be expressed in words. The funeral was about five hours long, but did not seem that long to Barbara and Sarah. This was an experience that they will never forget. It was an experience that would never have been possible without the leadership of Al Pate and Patrick Sullivan, Directors of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Because of the leadership at the North Chicago VA Medical Center, the rewards and the enrichment of history for the veterans and employees have been exemplified.

Medical Center Goes to Winter Olympic Games

Gail Doese has been back at her desk in human resources for a few months. Mostly reserved, Gail was far from that during the Winter Olympics. Gail took vacation time so as not to miss a game. On the other side of the medical center, her son, Rich, was also tuned into the action. You see, their husband and father, Neil Doese, was at the Olympics in Torino, Italy. He was not there watching; he was coaching the U.S. Women's Curling Team.

Many of the staff and patients at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center did not know much about the sport of curling at the start of the Olympics; they do now. The schedules and scores were posted on the bulletin board in the main corridor, there was a link on the medical center's intranet website and the games were shown via in-house television as well as a story in the newsletter, *5000 West*.

In a telephone interview with Coach Doese before he left for Italy, you could hear the adrenalin increasing in his voice as he talked about the team and his life of the past few years. To say he had been busy would be a gross understatement. As a Vietnam-era Army veteran, he didn't see the world, but joining the Olympics has put a few miles on his travel card. The many weekend trips to Bemidji, Minnesota – where the team practiced – also made for some very long weeks.

Coaching is important, but it isn't his only gig. Mr. Doese is a teacher at Calvary Baptist School in Menomonee Falls where his slate is full. Last fall he recently moved into a new school building which meant a lot of hands-on work.

He and the team entered into the Olympic competition being number two at Worlds held last year in Scotland. The increased media attention is good for the game.

In his coaching style, Coach Doese tries to get the nervousness away from the sport. He tells his team to go out and perform. "If they perform well, the competition will take care of itself and there will be a lot of wins as a result of performing." He emphasizes to "perform rather than compete."

At the games, the U.S. women curlers finished 2-7 in the nine-game round-robin in which four of the games were tied after regulation play. Coach Doese was impressed with the team and spoke with pride; "They know how to handle themselves even when they lose. They sold the sport in whatever they did, whether it was an NBC appearance or a European broadcast. I am proud of them."

The coach said he enjoyed meeting the other athletes and coaches from the U.S. "I have been surrounded by great people." Not just at the Olympics as he paraded around the stadium representing us, but throughout his life. He especially noted the outstanding support and prayers of his family.

Wife Gail says, "This is part of his dream." Actually it is a part of *their* dream. The feeling is beyond words when you are blessed to be part of a dream come true for someone you love. The Doese's know that.

Now that the Olympics are over, the adrenalin continues to pump when he talks about his sport. Coach Doese has taken the proverbial deep breath, and with the school year coming to closure, the coach and Gail might just take a nice little vacation. He says that Bemidji has some pretty good fishing about that time of year.

VA & HHS to Target Diabetes Obesity in American Veterans

With obesity and deadly diabetes at significantly higher levels among America's veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have announced a coordinated campaign to educate veterans and their families about ways to combat these health issues.

"Inactive lifestyles and unhealthy eating habits can cause needless suffering for America's veterans," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Obesity and diabetes are major threats to the health and lifestyles of our veterans, deserving a robust campaign to better educate them on healthy habits."

Veterans are more likely than the general population to have diabetes, one of the major complications associated with being overweight. According to the American Diabetes Association, 7 percent of the U.S. population has diabetes, and the rate increases with age. Among veterans receiving VA health care, who are on average older than the general population, the rate is 20 percent.

"Central to our goal of controlling the cost of health care is the promotion of wellness, fitness and the prevention of chronic disease. We are working to encourage Americans to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to take responsibility for making wise choices to improve their fitness and health," said HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt.

In a February 27, 2006 news conference, Secretary Nicholson, HHS Secretary Leavitt, Surgeon General Dr. Richard H. Carmona and VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Jonathan B. Perlin announced the start of a campaign called "HealthierUS Veterans" – a multi-pronged educational effort to spawn healthy eating and physical activity among veterans, their families and members of their communities.

VA medical centers will promote nutrition and exercise with local groups in 40 communities that receive grants from HHS in a program called "Steps to a HealthierUS."

"Our service men and women are known for their extraordinarily high levels of fitness," said Perlin. "We want our veterans to be identified the same way."

Overweight patients receiving VA health care may participate in weight loss programs tailored to their needs. They may also receive pedometers, diet advisories and "prescriptions" suggesting how much to walk -- or, in the case of wheelchair users, how much to roll.

The two secretaries also plan to kick off regional educational campaigns this spring in four cities where VA and HHS Steps programs collaborate. Local celebrities and members of veteran's service organizations will be invited to participate.

In May, the "HealthierUS Veterans" program will participate with the President's Council on Physical Fitness during the council's annual rally in Washington.

Veterans' Health Care Outscores Private Sector - Again

Veterans continue to be more satisfied with their health care than the average American, according to an annual report on customer satisfaction that compares the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system with private-sector health care.

The ratings came in the annual American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), which ranks "customer satisfaction" with various federal programs and private-sector industries.

"Although VA has received many wonderful endorsements recently, the support of our veterans - the people who know us best - is the highest praise," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "This is a testament to the hard work of VA employees, the support of Congress and the leadership of the White House."

The ACSI, an independent survey of customer satisfaction within both the federal and private sectors, gave VA's inpatient care a rating of 83 on a 100-point scale. That's 10 percentage points higher than the 73 rating achieved for inpatient care by the private-sector health care industry.

VA's rating of 80 for outpatient care was five percentage points higher than the 75 rating for private-sector outpatient care and nine percentage points higher than the average satisfaction rating for all federal services.

The latest findings mark the sixth consecutive year VA's health care system has outranked the private sector for customer satisfaction.

"VA provides world-class health care for our veterans," said Dr. Jonathan B. Perlin, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "The ACSI ratings confirm that our veterans recognize the dedicated service of VA's health care professionals."

Since 1994, the ACSI survey has been a national measurement of customer satisfaction with the quality of goods and services in the United States.

ACSI produces indices of satisfaction for seven economic sectors, 41 industries, 200 private-sector companies and two types of local government services.

VA's strong showing came after interviews with veterans who have recently used the Department's services. The report is the product of the National Quality Research Center at the University of Michigan Business School, the CFI group, and the Federal Consulting Group.

Health care is just one of many potential benefits available to those who served in our nation's armed forces. If you served, or know someone who did, check on eligibility for benefits and services from VA at: www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000

VA ACHE Regents Advisory Council

Several years ago the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) recognized VA membership within its organization by extending two Regent positions. Ms. Cathi Spivey-Paul, FACHE, Director, Northern Indiana Healthcare System is the VA Regent, VA Eastern Region and Mr. Steven Gentling, FACHE, Director, VAMC Oklahoma is the VA Regent, VA Western Region. VISN 12 is part of the VA Eastern Region. Regents are determined by the number of members that list VA as their affiliated organization. If you are a member of ACHE and receive an email notice from ACHE directing you to a link that contains your Regents Newsletter, that link should take you to a newsletter with a picture of Cathi Spivey-Paul, FACHE. If it does not, then we may not be getting credit for your VA membership in ACHE.

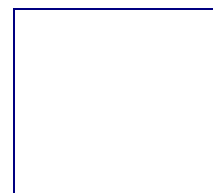
Hines Director Jack Hetrick is currently serving on the Regents Advisory Council for the VA Regents. In this role, he will be providing periodic information related to VA and ACHE. The Regents Advisory Council was very involving in the planning and delivery of the recent VA Symposium held at the end of the Congress on Healthcare Management in Chicago.

Mr. Hetrick encourages all VA ACHE members in VISN 12 to send him an email message upon reading this announcement so that he can begin to develop a mail group for future communications. This will also allow him to cross check records to make certain your ACHE membership is being credited to VA which ultimately gives us a stronger voice within the organization.

Please send your message, to include your name, title and contact number to Jack.Hetrick@va.gov. In the future, he will be publishing a listing of VISN 12 ACHE members and their credentials so all employees within VISN 12 can recognize your commitment to healthcare management, identifying ways VA ACHE members can become involved in ACHE committees and how to compete for ACHE awards.

Finally, he encourages you to visit the VA ACHE website for more information about the VA Regents and various committees that work with the Regents. The web address is: <http://va-ache.vha.med.va.gov>.

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